The Christian Faith

According to THE SHORTER CATECHISM

BY

WILLIAM CHILDS ROBINSON

PROFESSOR IN

COLUMBIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DECATUR ... GEORGIA

TR
53
X
R666

The Christian Faith

According to THE SHORTER CATECHISM

BY

WILLIAM CHILDS ROBINSON

PROFESSOR IN

COLUMBIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DECATUR ... GEORGIA

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." —II. Tim. 1:13.

THE LIBRARY
Union Theological Seminary
RICHMOND, VA.

TR
53
X
R666

INTRODUCTION

THE genesis of this SUMMARY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH ACCORDING TO THE SHORTER CATECHISM is to be found in the action of the Session of the Pryor Street Presbyterian Church of Atlanta requesting an explanation of the catechism. This request was supported by the Executive Committee of Religious Education of the Presbytery and submitted to the Executive Committee of Religious Education and Publication in Richmond. The Editor-in-Chief of the Richmond Committee asked the author to prepare an exposition of the doctrinal part of the Shorter Catechism. On completion, significant sections of the work were successfully used in the communicant classes of the West End and the North Avenue Churches of Atlanta and in several summer conferences and Daily Vacation Bible Schools. Dr. John L. Fairly decided to simplify the presentation for the junior age group, and pending this simplification kindly approved the publication of the exposition in The Southern Presbyterian Journal. With some correction of typographical slips and occasional amplifications, the material published in The Journal is assembled in this pamphlet.

The publication of this booklet is timely. With the menace of communism on the one hand and the increasing propaganda of Roman Catholicism on the other our people need clear and definite teaching. In our own Church the women are studying THE FAITH WE PROFESS, and the Research Committee of the General Council is making plans for a series of doctrinal helps for our preaching. From their respective viewpoints, the U.S.A. Presbyterian Church has recently issued a commentary on their Intermediate Catechism entitled, AN OUTLINE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, and the Methodist Church has made the first theme of their preaching and teaching endeavor OUR FAITH.

This **Summary of the Christian Faith** is sent forth with the prayer that God may use it to encourage us to obey from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to us. (Rom. 6:17). Our ministers are invited to use the Bible and the Shorter Catechism according to the outline here offered in their Easter Communicant Classes. Others can find in the brief treatment of the several questions of the catechism suggestions that will "prime the pump" for a series of evening sermons or prayer meeting talks on the Christian Faith. The evening congregations at the Pryor Street Presbyterian Church of Atlanta bear testimony that such a series does draw. We look forward to the time when these great doctrinal themes will again become the strong meat for our morning congregations.

We offer this booklet to the parents as an aid in teaching their children the principles of the Christian faith according to their baptismal vows. Teachers of the Junior, Intermediate and Senior age groups will find it useful in understanding and

in explaining the Shorter Catechism to their pupils. Adult Bible Classes and Young People's Fellowships will occasionally wish to vary their regular programs with a study of the meaning of our faith. Try out these studies as a basis for a discussion group.

Decatur, Ga.

Feb. 1, 1950. Wm. C. Robinson.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

The Shorter Catechism is the work of the Westminster Assembly of Divines which met at the call of Parliament in Westminster Abbey, London, on July 1, 1643, and continued in session for six years. The Assembly was composed of about a hundred and fifty English ministers and lay assessors and eight Scottish ministers and elders. They met to bring the worship, the doctrine, the government and the discipline of the Churches of Great Britain into closer conformity with the Word of God.

The Shorter Catechism is the final and finest work of that great Assembly. The work on the Catechism was undertaken early but in its final form was approved last. All the fine Lutheran and Reformed Catechisms from the days of the Reformation were at hand to draw upon. In the Assembly itself there were at least a dozen members who had written catechisms. Calvin's Catechism, one by Herbert Palmer, a member of the Assembly, and a Manual by Archbishop Ussher influenced the work. In addition to Palmer, "the best catechist in England," Dr. John Wallis, the mathematician, and Rev. Samuel Rutherford of Scotland seem to have shared in the preparation of this work. Our Shorter Catechism ranks with Luther's Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism and is described as "one of the three typical Catechisms of Protestantism which are likely to last to the end of time."

The purpose of the authors of the Catechism was to frame the answer, not according to the model of the knowledge the child has, but according to what the child ought to have. Thus it is a pre-eminently instructive work. It places thoughts in the mind and heart of the child which grow with him, which indeed help the child to grow in wisdom and in grace. Thomas Carlyle, the great Scottish thinker, said: "The older I grow, and I now stand on the brink of eternity—the more comes back to me the first sentence in the Catechism which I learned when a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes: 'What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.' "

The Catechism may be divided into three major divisions: The first dealing with faith or doctrine, the second with duty or conduct, and the third with the means of grace and worship. In Scotland, Principal Salmond of Aberdeen, issued a threefold exposition of the Shorter Catechism of which the several parts bore the following terms: Summary of

the Christian Doctrine (Q. 1-38); Summary of Christian Duty (Q. 39-81); and The Way of Life (Q. 82-107). This study is roughly identical with his first study but is supplemented by a consideration of four questions, 84-87. In communicant classes the writer has found the inclusion of these questions essential to a full presentation of the plan of salvation. Our study is designed to be simpler than the parallel studies by Principal Salmond and the similar one by Dr. Alexander Whyte. These earlier studies have been freely drawn upon by the writer.

Manual For Communicant Classes

There are a number of manuals for classes preparing for the Lord's Supper or the Communion. After using several of these the writer found in the Shorter Catechism a plan which he has used with even more satisfaction than these good manuals. The Catechism is used in dependence upon the Bible, for it is only a summary statement of the Bible. The following series of studies may be used for five or six lessons leading up to Communion Sunday or to Easter Sunday. They have also been used in Daily Vacation Bible Schools. If the pastor or visiting minister will teach such a course in the mornings at the Daily Vacation Bible School, and then present the Gospel at a series of evangelistic services the period will often be blessed with a gracious ingathering. The writer has the young people memorize Bible verses setting forth the essential steps in the Plan of Salvation and uses the Catechism question, the answers, and the exposition to supplement the Word. Of course, each minister will adapt the course to his own class. This is offered, then, as suggested outline:

The Plan Of Salvation

Michael Faraday, the great scientist, was once asked: "What is the greatest discovery you ever made?" After some thought the noted scientist replied: "When I discovered that I had a Saviour." That is the great discovery we want every boy and girl to make. In order to discover that you have a Saviour it is first necessary to realize that you need a Saviour. And so our first lesson is:

(1) Why do I need a Saviour? Catechism Questions 14-19,84. Scriptures: Romans 3:23; I John 3:4; Romans 6:23.

(2) What has the Lord Jesus Christ done to save me? Catechism Questions 23-26. Scriptures: Acts 4:12; I Peter 2:24; John 1:29; II Cor. 5:21; Isaiah 53.

(3) What does the Holy Spirit do to save me? Questions 29-31. Scriptures: John 3:5-6; 1:12-13; Titus 3:5-6; Romans 8:15-17.

(According to First John the three evidences of the new birth are faith in Christ, love one for another, and doing right).

(4) What does God, the Father, do to save me? Questions 20,32-35. Scriptures: John 3:16; Luke 11:13; Galatians 2:16; I John 3:1; Ephesians 4:24.

(5) What does God ask of me to be saved? Questions 85-87. Scriptures: Acts 20:21; Phil. 3:9; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9; Acts 5:31.

(6) What does the Church do for my salvation? Questions 88-92. Scriptures: Acts 2:41-42; II Timothy 3:15-17; Matthew 28:19; I Corinthians 11:23-25; Matthew 16:16-19.

This last theme may be expanded into several studies. One may use the first five studies for the first week of a Daily Vacation Bible School and expand the sixth to continue through a second week, using these themes: (1) the Word, (2) baptism, (3) infant baptism, (4) the Lord's Supper, and (5) prayer. The following study in the Lord's Supper may be useful:

(a) Who instituted this sacrament? Christ. (b) For whom did He institute it? Believers. (c) What does a believer receive? Bread in his hand, Christ in his heart. (d) Who makes the sacrament effective? The Holy Spirit.

Outlines Of The Shorter Catechism

Introduction: The foundations of our religion. Questions 1-2-3.

What Man Is To Believe: The teaching or the doctrine about God. Questions 4-38.

The doctrine of God Himself. Questions 4-6.

The doctrine of God's works, in general. Questions 7-11.

The doctrine of God's special works for man.
The Covenant of Life (or of works). Questions 12-19.

Man's test or probation. Question 12.

Man's sin and fall. Questions 13-19.

The Covenant of Grace. Questions 20-38.

The Redeemer and His work. Questions 21-28.

The Holy Spirit and the work of applying redemption. Questions 29-38.

(The means of receiving redemption. Questions 84-87).

What Man Is To Do: Obey the revealed will of God. Questions 39-107.

The Christian Faith According To The Shorter Catechism

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Boys, when you are running a race where do you fix your eyes? In a football game what are you striving to reach? The goal of course. Now what is the great goal of life? What is the purpose that means most of all to you? To get rich? To be famous? To succeed? To be the top man? Our Church says that there is a higher end than all these. That end is God: to know Him, to praise Him, to honor Him, to serve Him, to thank Him, to enjoy Him. As you seek this highest object you will attain many lower ends that are worthwhile. You will become better, more honest, more truthful, more helpful to others. As you set your compass for the true end for which you were made you will truly become what you ought to be. God made us like Himself. As we seek His glory we take the road that leads us up to that likeness.

Of all the things God has made man is the only visible creature that is able to know God and praise Him. We are made to glorify God. God does not exist to humor us. Every bit of knowledge we gain ought to lead us to praise the Maker of all things. But doing, praises God as well as knowing. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Most of all, we sinners need to praise God for the Glory of His grace which saves us. When we see God's loving heart in Jesus Christ, we trust Him, we rejoice in His love, we praise Him for His merciful kindness. When Hampden C. DuBose, our great missionary to China, was too old to preach he continued to translate Christian works into Chinese. One day his wife came and asked him to stop and rest. "No," he replied, "we must glorify God every day of our lives and then go home to enjoy Him forever."

Augustine, the doctor of the Western Church, said: "O Lord, Thou has made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." As soon as we come to God and seek to glorify Him, we begin to enjoy Him. But, of course, we shall enjoy Him all the more in Heaven.

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?

A. The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.

If you are running a hundred-yard race you can see the goal from the start. But if you are running a four-mile cross-country you want markers to show you the course. If you are lost in a desert you

need a compass to chart the course, or if it is a clear night you might use the North Star to set your course. Since you are young, since your knowledge is limited, and since sin has darkened your understanding you need a compass or rule to guide you on the race of life. The Bible is the compass God has given to guide our lives. When we set our course by it we live life at its highest and its best. It is the mind of God in the language of men.

God is not just any thought or idea that a man or a boy may have. God is the living and true BEING who made everything else and who tells us What He Himself is and does. God shows us Himself in His Word. Everyone reveals what he is by what he says and what he does. God spoke His own Word to Abraham and to Moses, to the prophets and to the Psalmist. This first part of the Bible is the Old Testament. Finally, God became man in Jesus of Nazareth who is the Word of God in person. The story of Jesus and the meaning of His coming is the New Testament, even as the Old Testament is the promise of His coming. Thus, the message of the whole Bible is Jesus Christ, God's Word to us. And the Bible is God's witness to Christ our Saviour and Lord. As we read the Bible, the living and true God reveals Himself to us so that we may glorify and enjoy Him.

How can we understand the Bible? Well God Himself comes into our hearts and opens our minds that we may understand His Word. God the Holy Spirit shows us Christ as our Saviour. He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts so that in His light we see light.

The English word **Testament** means about the same thing as the word **will.** A man's last will and testament declares how he wills his property to be divided between his wife and his several children. When Christ died He willed His salvation to everyone who believes in Him. The word **testament** also carries with it the idea of a **covenant,** an **economy,** a plan of operation or administration. God placed the Jewish people under one mode of administering (working) His plan of salvation and the Christian Church under another or new mode of administering (working) the same plan of salvation. The Old Testament mode was by priests and animal sacrifices; that of the New Testament was by the preaching of the Word, baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Q. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

The first two questions have been introductory, this answer gives us the outline for the rest of the catechism. Questions 4 through 38 deal with what we are to believe and from 39 to the end largely with what we are to do. There are many matters in the Bible, history, geography, biography, literature, but the Bible is above all else God's Book. It is inspired by Him in order to reveal to us who and

what He is and what He, our Maker and our Saviour, would have us do.

We must come to the Bible and get right ideas about God. There is only one living and true God and He has revealed Himself in His Word. Here He speaks, here His heart overflows in love for us, here He comes in Christ to save us.

We receive this knowledge of God by belief or faith. Belief is knowledge that comes, not from seeing things as we saw yesterday's baseball game, nor from reasoning as we do in working our arithmetic problems, but from teaching or testimony. We receive the testimony of our mother about things we did as a baby, we accept the teaching at school about London or Paris though we have never seen them, we believe our preacher when he tells us of Paul and of David. If we accept the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. And so our faith in God our Saviour that comes from God's Book is stronger than our assurance of these things we learn from mother or teacher.

God knows best what is right and what is wrong. In the first place, He made us like God Himself, and His law is simply this: Be like God. The Bible goes on and tells us what we ought to do to be like God, especially in the Ten Commandments and in the Sermon on the Mount. A true understanding of God and an obedient life are the whole duty of man.

Q. 4. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

When the Westminster Assembly came to this question they did not know how to answer it, but called on one of their ministers to pray for guidance. Young George Gillespie addressed God and described Him in the words of this answer. The brethren decided that the opening words of his prayer were the answer to this prayer. These words came to Gillespie's lips because he was a diligent student of the Bible. They are a fine summary of the truth of God as He has revealed Himself in His Word. The opening phrase is the reply of our Lord Jesus made to the woman of Samaria when she asked which was the more sacred place: Gerizim or Jerusalem. "God is a Spirit," said Jesus, "and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." God is a Spirit, not a body with different parts.

Then in distinction from other spirits God is **infinite,** without any limit of space; He is **eternal,** without beginning or ending or limit of time; He is **unchangeable,** dependable, subject to none of the uncertainties and inconsistencies which belong to us. He is constant, faithful to His own character. "What Jesus Christ is in history, that God eternally is." When their loved ones were far away in dangerous battles many parents found help in the assurance that: "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even

there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand uphold me." When a son was reported missing and presumably dead in France his father, a Presbyterian elder stayed his heart on the words of Jeremiah 23:23-24—until God gave him back his son alive—freed from a prison camp.

These distinctions of God apply to His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. God is the only true BEING, that is He exists of Himself and everyone else gets his being from God. In God's being there are the same virtues that we admire in men, only in God they are in perfect or full measure without any limit. And God always acts according to every one of His virtues. He exercises His Power in ways that are wise and good and just and holy. In our child's catechism we had the question: "Can God do all things?" It was excellently answered in these words: "God can do all His holy will."

Wisdom is more than mere knowledge, it is intelligence that sees and patience that directs all to great and gracious ends. Holiness is separation from evil, opposition to sin, wholeness, wholesomeness. The Psalmist speaks of God's saving health. Justice means treating everyone right—rewarding the good and punishing the evil. God is a just God, even when He forgives sin; for God, our Saviour, has suffered the punishment sin deserved. He gave Himself for us that He might justly forgive us. In His **goodness** God is kind to all His creatures, seeking their good even when they are opposing Him. God is merciful to the unmerciful, loving to those who hate Him, gracious and forgiving to sinners. His faithfulness or His **truth** endureth to all generations. And that truth is living, active, personal, for the Lord Jesus said: "I am the Truth." "Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ."

Q. 5. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

Professor Hengstenberg of Bonn was such a brilliant scholar that he had calls to several other universities, but such an unbeliever that he left a statement of his infidel principles at Bonn. God touched his heart in a Moravian service and he was led by the simple study of the Bible to a firm faith in God. And so, in his first lecture as Professor of Oriental Languages at Berlin he said: "It matters not whether we make a god out of stone or out of our own understanding; it is still a false god; there is but one living God, the God of the Bible."

"In the beginning God"—that is the way the Bible begins. At first there was only one being, God, and everything else has been made by Him. God is the living God, that is, He has life in and of Himself. God exists of Himself and He gives life to everything else. How appropriately, therefore, He calls Himself the **Living** God. Our Lord Jesus speaks of God as **the living Father,** Peter confesses the Saviour as **the Son of the living God,** Paul calls the Church **the Church of the living God** and believers **the children of the living God.**

Christ also speaks of the Father as **the true God** and Paul commends the Thessalonians for turning from idols to serve **the living and true God.** God is the real God as opposed to idols that men make, or gods that people make up out of their imagination. We must each one take care that we receive our ideas about God from His self-revelation—that is, from the Bible. My idea of God, your idea of God needs to be corrected by the Word so that we may know and worship and enjoy the living and true God and not be satisfied with setting up a mere shadow god, a mere idol of someone's fancy.

This one God called Abram from Ur, spoke to Moses at the burning bush, and manifested Himself to Isaiah in the year that King Uzziah died. The living and true God who made heaven and earth became the Man Jesus Christ that He might save us. He appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus to change him from an enemy to a disciple. As we read the Word of God's grace, as we hear the Word of Christ, the same living and true God speaks to us. The Good Shepherd calls His own sheep by name and we hear and follow Him. The Spirit bears witness with our spirits that God is our Father and we are His children.

Q. 6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

In the one only, living and true God there is first the Father who made us and all things, and who, when we sinned, gave His only Son to be our Saviour. As we come to the Father in the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, He forgives our sins and receives us as His children. Second, there is the eternal Son who became also man for us and for our salvation, who was born of the Virgin Mary, who lived a perfect life, doing good, who died for our sins on the Cross, who rose for our forgiveness, and who is now at the Father's right hand praying for us. Third, there is God the Holy Spirit, who takes the things of Christ and shows them to us, who brings Christ into our hearts, who sheds abroad the love of God in us and leads us to trust our loving heavenly Father. All the goodness that we have comes from Him. By the witness of God the Holy Spirit we know that God the Father is our Father on account of the merits of God the Son (Jesus Christ).

And so you see God is not just a lone and lonesome individual. Before God ever made the stars or the angels, there was a family of love in God Himself. The Father saw Himself in His image, the Eternal Son; the Son rejoiced in the Father, and the Holy Spirit was the link of love in this holy fellowship. And it was to manifest this holy life of love and to draw others into its enjoyment that God made angels and men. We bow our knees unto the Father of whom every family in heaven and earth is named. And so the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit abides with us.

Substance just means being. In His very BEING, God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the same BEING. Or, "the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, but these are not three gods, for God is one."

Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are, His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Briefly the decrees of God are His plans. A woman making a dress begins with a plan or pattern. A man building a house first has an architect draw the plans, or blue-prints. Before the Allies landed in France on D-Day there were months and years of plans and preparations so that the undertaking might not fail. God knows the end from the beginning and has plans that take in all events. So there will never be a surprise for God and He will never be in an emergency, or as you boys might say, "a tight spot," in which He is unable to act. God's will always expresses His character and so His acts are always wise and free and holy and good.

God has planned the making and the history of the world to show forth His glory. The stars above us show God's power and wisdom. The tiny atoms men are learning how to split show the vast power God has hidden in the least bit of matter. God's plan takes in even the smallest details of our lives. In the history of the American colonies we can see the hand of God in His good Providence toward us. Indeed, God's eternal purpose means that the eternal God is living and ruling and directing things every moment of the day. His hand is at the wheel of the universe and He knows where He is going.

Most of all we need to remember that our Lord Jesus Christ is the center of God's plan, the beginning of all His ways and works toward men. The plan of the ages is in Christ; all things hold together in Him. God so loved us as to give us His only Son. Surely His plans will work out for the good of all those who love Him, whom He calls in His fellowship through Jesus Christ. God is glorified as men are saved and turned from sin to right living—yes, as we stop to thank and praise Him for making us in the first place and for saving us when we have sinned.

Q. How doth God execute His decrees?

A. God executeth His decrees in the works of creation and providence.

We compared the decrees of God to the plans an architect draws for a great building. If most of us saw the blue-prints for this building we could not imagine what the building would look like. Yes, and when we saw loads of brick and sand and lumber piled on a lot we could still not be able to picture the finished building. But when the building was all complete then we would see what was in the architect's mind and what was the meaning of his blue-prints. So we cannot read God's mind except by

what He has said and done and by what He is doing. As we look at the stars above us and the world in which we live we know that God had a plan to make this world. Where there was nothing, God decreed to make this world and the sun and stars and moon above it. We know what God decreed to create by what He has made.

Day by day we learn what God's decrees of Providence are—for each day unfolds another part of His plan. In His Providence God decreed to establish a home and decided that you and I were to be born in just the home we were, and have just the mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters He gave us. Day by day God gives us our daily bread and cares for and protects us. Sometimes He does this by angels, sometimes by people, sometimes by natural forces, sometimes He acts directly. As you read the history of the United States think of God's good Providence over us in giving us our country, our liberty, and so many victories and bounties. The greatest gift that God ever gave in the course of man's history was His only Son Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world. And in His Providence God has put you in a community where the things of Jesus can be taught to you in the Church, the Sunday School, and the home.

Q. 9. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is God's making all things out of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. First there was only God who has life in Himself, and then God made all things by the word of His power. Stop and think of God as He was before He made anything and of everything else as made by Him and you begin to realize how complete is His rule and how great His power.

The Greeks taught that there were two necessary and eternal beings, God and matter. The Bible says only God is eternal and necessary. Other thinkers imagined that the world or at least souls somehow emanated or came out of God and spoke of the soul as "a spark of the Infinite." But the Bible tells us that God created out of nothing the souls as well as the bodies of men. Other people have thought of two gods, a good god and an evil god, and sin and evil being in the world by the creation of this evil god. But the Bible tells us that God made all things and made them all very good. There is evil in the world now, but there was none here when God finished His work. God made the world good; we creatures by our sins against God have brought in all the evil and suffering that mar the world today. But God, who made things good in the beginning, will finally bring them back good again through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Our hope of a new heaven and a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness is in Him.

God did not make everything at once but took a space of time to do it. The first chapter of Genesis tells us what God made on each day of that certain week. How long these first days were we do not

know. The wholeweek of creation is spoken of as "the day" of God's creating the heaven and the earth (Gen. 2:4) and one day is with the Lord as a thousand years (II Peter 3:8).

Q. 10. How did God create Man?

A. God created man, male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

If you read the account of creation in the first chapter of the Bible you find that there is a change at the creation of man. At each point before this God simply speaks and by the word of His power it is done. Here God stops as it were and confers as if He were now to do a work that was distinct from and superior to all that He had made before. "God said: Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness ... So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." In the one only, living and true God there is a blessed fellowship, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And so God made man, male and female, that man might be a social being and not be limited to fellowship with the lower creatures.

Only of man it is said that God made him after His own likeness. God made man as like to Himself as a creature can be. Thus man can live an intelligent, free personal life very different from that of the lower creatures. "The parts of the image of God impressed on man's soul were knowledge on his mind, righteousness on his will, and holiness on his affections." (Boston). He understood as God does immediately and directly. Heaven lay all about man in the infancy of the race. He knew God and his own relation to God and his duty.

Moreover, his will was set to obey God, to do the right and reject the wrong. This integrity of will rested on a holy love for God. Being pure in heart he saw God.

With this high and holy character God gave man dominion over the creatures. The animals came to Adam to be named by him. As God reigns over all things so this godlike creature, man, was given the right to reign over the creatures. Here on this earth God put man to be the king over the creatures, the prophet who knew and spoke of God, the priest to offer to God the worship of the world. But Jesus Christ is the only man who has perfectly fulfilled these three offices!

Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are His most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions.

The best way to describe Providence is to say that it is God's hand over man's hand, always and all the time. If you read carefully the second and fourth chapters of Acts you will hear Peter saying this. He says that Jesus was cricified by the wicked hands of men and then he says that these wicked men did what Thy hand and Thy council determined before to be done. The hand of God is not

absent from the affairs of this world, even when wicked men are acting. In spite of, and sometimes even by means of, evil men, God governs all His creatures and all their actions. He was protecting and directing the life of Joseph even when his mean brothers sold him into slavery. He was sending Joseph ahead to save all of their lives when the famine came. God only allows evil persons to go so far as He wills. In the same act they act and He acts: they mean it for evil; God makes it turn out for good to those who love Him.

God feeds the sparrows and watches over them so that not one falls to the ground without His will. God clothes the lilies of the field. God numbers the very hairs of our heads. God works all things after the counsel of His own will. (Eph. 1:11). "The Lord of hosts hath sworn saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed so shall it stand." (Isaiah 14:24). God is at the helm. The living God with all power in His hand, all love in His heart, all wisdom in His mind is moment by moment sustaining, upholding, empowering, guiding and directing every creature He has made and moving all things toward the great and blessed end He has for His creatures. Of that blessed consummation Jesus Christ is our assurance and our hope.

Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, He entered into a covenant of life with him upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil upon pain of death.

How far is man the creature below God, his maker! God speaks to man how high is he, thereby, elevated above the animals! As God made man nobler than the lower creatures, so here we find Him dealing with man on a higher plane. Covenant comes from the same root as the word convention. It means to come together, to meet, to agree. The Most High graciously condescended to meet with man, to treat this creature as a responsible, free personality. There was a meeting of God's mind and man's mind as God laid before man the condition which He required of man, with a **promise** of obedience and a threat for disobedience. Because God has so created us and so deals with us we have conscience, duty, a sense of ought, a knowledge of right and of wrong. Man is a responsible person.

Let us not forget, however, to see God as the Lord of this act, as of everything else. This covenant was not a contract between two equals, it was not a case of two men reaching an agreement by a process of bargaining, of give and take. Acting in His love and also in His lordship, God laid down the conditions of the covenant and man accepted them.

The covenant in Eden was a covenant of life, for life was the reward of obedience, or it was the

covenant of works because man was to attain this end by his own obedience. A covenant of works could offer life only to a sinless or unfallen man. After the fall the only way man could attain everlasting life was by a covenant of grace based on the Saviour and His saving work for us.

The condition required of unfallen man was perfect obedience. The test was a positive law forbidding him to eat of a certain specific tree. This was designed to test his love for and obedience to God. God who knows everything and loves most forbids man to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Will man obey God's command out of respect for and love to God, or will he decide he knows better than God does and put his will above God's Word? Thus man was faced with a conscious choice, a real option between God's will and his own notion. If man disobeys, the threat is the pain or the penalty or the punishment of death. The word death here means not only physcial death, but death in the sense of sinfulness and separation from God.

Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

Think a moment. What is it that you have that is your very own, that even God did not give you? Sin. God made all things good. Sin has made devils and men very bad.

According to the covenant of works Adam was tested in order that if he stood the test he might be established or confirmed in holiness. He was able to stand but free to fall. Freedom of the will is the power to choose one of the different ways that are before one. Adam could eat the forbidden fruit, or he could refuse it. Freedom of his will meant this power to decide. But choosing to eat was disobeying God.

After man sinned and fell from the good estate or condition in which God had made him he was no longer so free as before. Fallen man was free to choose the evil, but he did not have power in himself to come back to God and His goodness—sin barred the way. Unfallen man had full power to obey and live, or disobey and die. Fallen man lost this power. He still has the power to obey his own will. He still has self-will. But the self is now bad.

I am bad and so my will is bad unless and until God by His gracious Holy Spirit gives me a new will for Christ's sake. When God in His grace creates me anew in Christ, God calls my will to obey Him and do right, but the flesh still pulls it toward evil. The Christian thus lives with two pulls upon him. When he is glorified he is confirmed in holiness. Then he will do only good. And he will do good freely, of his own will. Since he then is good, his will is good.

Q. 14. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Take a pencil and draw a line freehand from the top to the bottom of a sheet of paper. Now take a ruler and place it beside your freehand line. Make a sharp straight line alongside the ruler. Wherever your first line varies from the line of the ruler that is "a want of conformity unto" the ruled line. Now draw a third line, a horizontal line, crossing the two vertical lines. Where the horizontal line "steps across" the vertical line is "a transgression of" that line. God has given us His law to direct our lives. As we measure ourselves by this law we find where we fail to conform to His rule and where we step across or transgress the line He has given.

Some sins are failing to do what God tells us to do. We call these sins of omission. God tells us to honor our fathers and our mothers. When I fail to honor my mother, I commit a sin of omission. Other sins are doing what God tells us not to do. We call these sins of commission. God tells me not to steal. If I take an apple from the grocer when he is not looking that is a sin of commission. John tells us that sin is the transgression of the law. It is stepping across one of God's commandments.

Sin is an evil. Sin is that evil which is against the law. Sin is the greatest of all evils because it is against God the giver of the law. God made us and gave us every good thing we have. God is most wise, most holy, and most loving. In Jesus Christ God so loved us as to come and die to save us. And sin is attacking this loving heavenly Father, fighting against our best Friend, rebelling against the holy Lord of men and angels, breaking the law of the all-wise Creator.

Q. 15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

There was no evil in the fruit itself. The evil lay in man's eating it against the express command of God. To try man's obedience God forbade it to be eaten. God took an external thing, in itself indifferent, in order to test man's obedience on the point of the will of God, to make man's obedience a conscious choice.

> "Not that I tasted of the tree, my son,
> Was in itself the cause of my exile,
> But only my transgression of the mark
> Assigned me." —Adam to Dante.

Adam began by **doubting** God's Word. In **disbelief** of God the first pair listened to Satan. Finding God's Word and Satan's word directly contradictory, they decided to be the judge. They rejected God's interpretation, and accepted their own interpretation. Man's reason presumed to judge God's Word. His **pride** led Adam to put his opinion above

God's declared will. Proud man disobeyed the will of his Creator. As unbelief was the root of the fall, so faith alone unites us to God. (Augustine).

Q. 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

As Adam was the father of all men and the whole family of man was then in him, he was also made the agent or representative of the race. If he had obeyed and stood all men would have been righteous for he acted for all men. But when he sinned and fell we all sinned and fell in him for he acted for us all.

Thus, Adam's sin was imputed to the race. By imputed we mean counted to all, reckoned to all, put to the account of all, charged against all. When our Congressmen vote war they represent all the nation and put us all in the position of being at war. We all acted and voted through them. When Adam fell he acted for all and so all fell in him. Through his act we were all condemned as guilty of the sin he as our representative committed.

That is, all mankind descending from Adam by ordinary generation sinned in him. God brought one Person into the human race through an extraordinary generation. Our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary without any human father. Since he did not descend from Adam by ordinary generation he was not guilty of Adam's first sin. But He came into the world, that being sinless, He might be our second Adam and represent us in His perfect obedience and by His death for our sins secure our forgiveness. In Adam we sinned; in Christ we are forgiven. Adam's fall made us all sinners. Christ's obedience puts us in the state of being regarded and treated as righteous.

Q. 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

In the third chapter of Genesis we are told what sin did to Adam and Eve. First it changed their hearts from good to evil. They knew they had done wrong, that they were guilty, so they were ashamed and tried to hide from God. Secondly, it changed their place. God drove them out of the garden of His presence and placed there the cherubim with the flaming sword of justice to prevent their return. Thus man was brought into an estate or condition of sin and misery.

Sin is the burden of guilt pressing down on man's conscience, and also the power of disease, or spiritual death within. Man no longer had the power to do good and man was himself to blame for this lack. He was dead in trespasses and sins. He was at enmity toward God.

And thus shut out from God he was shut out from happiness. Misery became man's lot. God has made us for Himself and our hearts are restless until they rest in Him. Man's wicked rebellion against God changed man's heart and called forth from God that just act of putting man away from God. God's heart was so compassionate and loving, however, that He did not merely put man away. Rather, as we shall shortly see, He acted mightily to bring man back. The third of Genesis tells us how man's sin separated Him from God, the third of John tells us how God's love brought him back.

Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgression which proceeds from it.

This is the picture of sin which the Bible gives in the Psalms (32,51,130), and in Romans (1:18f; 5:12-21), in the words of our Lord. (Matt. 15:19). It is a picture confirmed by the history of men and by the accounts in the daily newspapers.

Guilt means debt, the punishment the law demands. A father is responsible before the law for an accident committed by his son while driving the father's car. A husband is liable for the debts his wife makes. If a man goes on the bond of his son and the son steals a sum of money, the father is held under his bond and has to make good the money stolen. So we see that guilt is not always limited to the one who did the act. Adam was our first father. And so we are all guilty of his first sin, exposed to punishment on account of that sin.

The want of original righteousness means we have lost that goodness or rightness of heart and life in which Adam was created. We are born sinners. God made Adam after His image, but Adam begat a son after his fallen image. By the fall the image of God was completely defaced, horribly mutilated, well-nigh obliterated*—like a coin with the image almost worn off or a mirror that no longer reflects the image of God the Maker.

Instead of the good disposition and the holy desires man had before the fall, we now have a nature that is unsound, set upon doing evil. This is called the depravity or the corruption of our whole nature. And this perversion affects the whole man, every part or aspect or faculty of our being. Apart from God's grace fallen man is all wrong, in all things, all the time. But that does not mean that he is either as bad as the devil, or that every man is as bad as every other man or that any man is as bad as he can become. Indeed, God exercises some restraint over even wicked men; otherwise life in this world would have already been destroyed by atomic or germ bombs.

---

*The Scot's Confession says, "completely obliterated, or effaced."

Original sin does not mean that Adam was created a sinner, but that we come into the world with sin upon us. In its fullest extent original sin means the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of the original righteousness, and the corruption of our whole nature. In its narrower use it refers only to the last of these three. It is used here to bring out the difference between the sin we bring with us into the world and the sins we ourselves commit.

Actual transgressions are our personal acts of sin, our sinful thoughts, imagination and desires, our sinful words, deeds and works. Our Lord Jesus said: "From within, out of the hearts of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, false witness, railings." "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." By the fall man became an enemy of God, a servant of sin, and an heir of hell.

In our great sin we sorely need a great Saviour. And in His great love God has given us the Saviour who is great enough to save us from our sin: His only begotten Son.

Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate into which man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

How can two walk together except they be agreed? Man ceased to be of one mind with God, and so real communion or fellowship ceased. "The great loss that man suffered by this fall was just the loss and withdrawal of the Holy Spirit, whose indwelling constituted and sustained the image of God in the human heart." (A. Whyte). So man was driven from the Garden of Eden and the cherubim barred the way of his return—until the Saviour should bring him back.

Man's wicked sin against God called forth God's wrath and curse upon man. Among men there is such a thing as righteous indignation against oppression, injustice and wrong. So the Bible tells us of the righteous wrath of God. (John 3:36; Rom. 1:18; 5:9; I Thess. 1:10; Heb. 3:11; 4:3). Yes, it tells us that we are "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), that is, that we are under or subject to wrath, worthy of being punished. And our consciences tell us that the Bible is right. The curse is the sentence of punishment for breaking the law, the condemnation of God.

Thus man is justly liable or exposed to all the pains or sufferings God may see fit to send upon him. These may be anxiety of heart and anguish of mind, loss of health or property, pains of hunger, calamities or disasters. Then there is the certainty of death and the fear that it may come at any moment. And beyond death are the penalties or the pains of Hell. And these pains are forever. Those that go to Hell leave God forever. They go into a life of never-ending sinning and never-ending punishments for that endless sinning. Today is the day of salvation! Now is the time that God has given us to close with that Saviour who alone shuts the gates

of Hell and opens the gates of Heaven for fallen men.

Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

"We have already sailed over one sea, that of man's corruption, a dead sea, as I may call it; and now we are entering upon another, a far vaster and deeper, of God's love and free grace." (Goodwin). The covenant of life based on the work of man's obedience failed; now God introduces the covenant of grace based on the work of Christ's redemption.

God having elected some. Every day we choose. We choose sides for our baseball games. We choose our friends, our boy friends and our girl friends. We choose our husbands and our wives. Our power of choice is due to the fact that God in the beginning made us like Himself. In the highest sense God has the right to choose, to elect. Both in Isaiah and in First Peter God calls the Messiah His **elect.** He also speaks of the **elect** angels, of Israel as the **elect** nation or the chosen people. God comforts Christian believers by saying: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's **elect?**" God chooses nations and individuals both to service and to salvation. Those whom He elects God calls to faith in Christ so that faith is the sign that He elected us.

Out of His mere good pleasure. Mere means **pure, unmixed;** and good pleasure means His good will, His favor, the kingly considerate love of God. It was God's good pleasure to make a plan to save lost and fallen man. Since man had rebelled and deserved nothing good from God this is a plan or a **covenant of grace.** For grace is God's love to the unlovely, to the undeserving, to the sinful and wicked. Grace always flows down to lift up those upon whom it is bestowed. God had His reasons for just the ones He does save, but these reasons are in God's great heart of love. They are not in the elect. None of us deserve the least bit of God's mercy.

God elected **some.** The contrast is not between some and many. The elect are described in the Book of Revelation as a great host that no man can number. The contrast is between **some** and **all.** We do not know how many or what proportion are saved and what lost. There are some in both groups. God might justly have left all to the punishment the whole fallen race deserved. God has left the fallen angels to their punishment. But in His gracious heart of love, He planned to save a host of fallen men.

This plan is **a covenant of grace.** Adam failed to meet the conditions of the covenant of works; Christ succeeded in meeting the conditions of the covenant of grace by His full and perfect obedience. By all that He did for us and all that He suffered in our stead, the Redeemer delivered us out of the estate of sin and misery and into an estate

of salvation. In our further questions we shall learn more of who Christ is and what He did to deliver or redeem us from the wrath of God. (I Thess. 1:10), from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13), from the guilt of sin (Eph. 1:7), from iniquity (Titus 2:14), from a vain life (I Peter 1:18).

Q. 21. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God became man and so was and continueth to be God and man in two distinct natures, and one person forever.

The only Redeemer. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." "No one knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto Me." "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." The apostles add: "Neither is there salvation in any other." "There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

The Eternal Son of God. The Saviour did not begin His personal life with His birth. Indeed, in His Person, He never began. He is the **eternal** Son of God. "Jesus Christ is the only Person who ever lived before He was born." (Brother Bryan). The life he lived some nineteen hundred years ago was the human, historical period in the life of an eternal Person. But our salvation rests on what He did for us in this human life.

Became man. Calling our Lord Jesus the WORD or the Revealer of God, John said: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Christmas celebrates this act of God's taking flesh. We call this the **Incarnation.** He who was God became also man. And from then on the one Divine Person had two natures, or two kinds of beings, the BEING of the CREATOR and the being of the creature. The human being or nature found its personality in the Divine Person.

We cannot fully understand this great truth; illustrations help us part of the way. You have two eyes but you see only one bat when you walk up to the plate, and you swing at only one ball. You are just one person, but you are not only body, you are also soul. Two eyes and one field of vision, body with its weight and soul with its thought yet only one person—these analogies help us to recognize that our Lord can be both God and man in one person.

As man He is our real flesh and blood brother who lived our life, who was tempted like as we are yet without sin, who died our death. As He, our example and elder brother, walked by faith in God, so we trust in God. As God manifest in the flesh He revealed the Father, He exercised His almighty power in working miracles, in raising His human nature from the dead. As God, He is with everyone of His disciples wherever they are today. We not only believe in God as He our Brother did; we first of all believe in Him, for He is God our Saviour. Saving faith rests on God in Christ.

Q. 22. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to Himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary and born of her yet without sin.

The Son of God became man. "It was not that, being man, He afterwards became God; but being God, He afterwards became man." (Athanasius). Of His own free and gracious will our Lord took our manhood in order that God's great love might act through it for our salvation. Yes, and also that He our Saviour might love us with both the everlasting love of the infinite God and the sympathetic affection of the true human heart. In His one Person there is both the love of God and the sympathy of a brother for everyone of us.

A true body and a reasonable soul. Some people have thought of the body as evil, because it is material. But matter is not evil. God made the earth as well as the heavens and made it good. Our Lord took flesh and blood of the seed of Abraham. His was as real a body as mine is. He hungered and thirsted, He wept and was weary. He was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin. Even after His resurrection He said to His disciples: "Behold My hands and My feet that it is I Myself; handle Me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as ye see Me have."

As His body was not a mere ghost or phantom or appearance, but a real body, so also He took a true human soul. In the early Church some men said that the Saviour took a human body but that the Divine Word was His reasonable soul. But the Gospels show that He took our human thinking soul as well as our Body. He spoke of His human will in distinction from the Divine will, in His human mind He increased in wisdom, He sorrowed, He rejoiced, He had righteous wrath against those who misused His Father's House.

Born of the Virgin Mary. As His Divine nature had no mother, so his human nature had no father. The Holy Spirit came upon Mary and the power of the Most High overshadowed her so that Christ was begotten by extraordinary or supernatural generation. He was "Of Virgin Maid and wedded mother born." "Hers was the face that unto Christ has most resemblance." By the power of the Holy Ghost Christ was conceived and born without sin. His Virgin Birth was the proper beginning of His sinless human life. Mary was given grace for her blessed place as the Mother of our Lord. In herself she was a sinner who needed the saving grace of God as truly as we do. He whom she bore was God. To Him we come for Divine grace and truth, for human love and sympathy. All the mercy, the kindness, the love of the Father's heart, all the sweetness, the piety, the compassion of a mother's spirit are in Christ.

Q. 23. What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation.

The Reverend John R. Mackay, an esteemed minister of the Free Church of Scotland, said that once when he looked into his own heart he could see there nothing but darkness, guilt and pride. "But," he continued, "then I remembered that Christ is a Prophet who can dispel my darkness. Christ is a Priest who can remove my guilt, Christ is a King who can humble my pride. And I said that it were good that Christ and I should meet."

In this answer the work of Christ for our salvation is described in the language of three **offices** and two **states.**

An office is any special trust, duty, charge or service laid upon or taken up by one person to perform for another. In the Old Testament we read of the work or offices of many prophets, priests, and kings. Our Lord Jesus Christ did all that it took three sets of men to do in the Old Testament and did all these offices better than they had. And He did all of the offices at one and the same time. He was and He is now our Prophet, our Priest, and our King; yes and our Shepherd, our Head, our Lord and Saviour.

And yet there is a difference between His state or condition as He did these things on earth and as He now does them in heaven. Phil. 2:5-11 tells us that, though Christ was in the form of God, yet He **humbled** Himself by becoming man, by taking the form of a servant, by dying the painful and shameful death of the Cross. We call this His **estate of humiliation.** The same passage tells us that because Christ did all this for our salvation, therefore, God also highly **exalted** Him. God raised Him from the dead and placed Him at His own right hand to reign over the people of God. This is Christ's **estate of exaltation.**

The work of Christ in all His offices is entirely adequate and complete. His people need no other prophet, no other priest, no other king to add to what He has done, or to supplement what He is doing. Remember, He is not insufficient, He is our all-sufficient Saviour!

Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by His Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

A prophet is one who speaks for God, who speaks God's Word. Reveal means to show, to unveil, to uncover what was before hidden. Christ is the prophet in the highest and fullest sense. He reveals God because He is God made plain in a human life. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto ME." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

"All His Father in Him shone." (Milton).

Christ is God, the Word, or God, the Revealer. Christ reveals the Father by His Word and His Spirit. The Son is that person of the Godhead who visited the Patriarchs and who spoke through the Old Testament prophets. Then He took our full human nature and lived our life from the cradle to the grave showing us the heart and love of God the Father in a soft human light. In this life He spoke

the words the Father gave Him to speak and did the deeds the Father gave Him to do. And the things the gracious Father gave Him to do and to bear were the things necessary for our salvation. The meaning or significance of what Jesus did and suffered for our salvation, of what He is doing for us now in His risen glory, He caused to be written for us in His Word.

Moreover, as we read the Word the living Christ sends His Spirit into our hearts to remove the blinds that sin set up there so that we can see clearly. The way of salvation is set forth in the Bible. The living Christ opens our minds to understand from it the will of God for our salvation. God puts His Word in our eyes as we read it, in our ears as we hear it, in our mouths as we repeat it. God puts His Word so close to us because God wants to save us. Since Christ is living and active, speaking to us by His Word and Spirit, the Word is called the mouth of the Lord. When we accept Christ on the authority of His Word we are accepting Him on His own authority. Faith is the living flash of identification of the Word as written with the voice of Him whose word it is. He is the Good Shepherd. As He speaks through His Word and accompanies the Word by His Spirit, we hear His voice and follow Him. He is the Door, by Him we enter in and are saved and go in and out and find pasture.

Q. 25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God.

As the prophet Christ speaks for God to us. As the priest He prays to God for us. Christ is both the Priest and the Sacrifice. He both makes the offering and He is the offering. He offers up Himself. Then, on the basis of that offering made once for all, He intercedes or prays to God for us.

He made one offering once for all, but He ever lives to intercede. That means He is always pleading the value, the efficacy of that one sacrifice. Because that one sacrifice means so much to God, therefore, He hears Christ's prayer and forgives our sins.

John the Baptist called Christ the Lamb of God. He meant for us to understand that the sacrifice of Christ is the great offering of which the lambs in the Old Testament were pictures or types, and these Old Testament sacrifices teach us the meaning of the true Lamb of God.

The first step in the Old Testament offering was to choose a lamb without spot or blemish. The one who offered the lamb was a sinner, the lamb he brought was a perfect specimen. That means that the lamb was not an exact picture of the offerer. It was a substitute for the sinner, a good lamb offered for a bad man. And so we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot and without blemish.

Second, the sinner who brought a lamb laid his hands upon the head of the lamb thus transferring his sin to the Lamb.

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all and frees us
From the accursed load."

Third, the Old Testament offerer took a knife and killed the lamb. His sin or his guilt had been transferred to the head of the lamb. By killing the lamb the sinner realized that the wages of sin is death. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

Fourth, some of the blood was sprinkled by the High Priest upon the altar and on the mercy seat in the holy of holies. At the Passover, the blood was sprinkled on the doorposts and the lintel. When the angel of death saw the blood of the sacrificed lamb, he passed over that home and did not enter to take the life of the firstborn. Thus the blood of the lamb covered the guilt of sin. Sin that is covered from the eyes of God's justice is removed, atoned for, satisfied, forgiven: "In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

Fifth, part of the offering was burnt as a sacrifice. As the cloud of smoke covered the offerer from the light of the sun, so the sacrifice covered the offerer or his sin from the wrath of God. Then: "Let us walk in love as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."

Finally, part or all of the lamb was sometimes eaten by the offerer. This was done with the Passover Lamb. As Christ our Passover was sacrified for us, so we come to the Lord's Table to receive the blessings of His death and His resurrection in the forgiveness of our sins and in the new life He gives us.

Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies.

Gabriel promised Mary that the Lord God would give unto her Child the Throne of His father David. Christ accepted the title King when it was given Him by Nathaniel, by the people of Jerusalem, and by Pilate. But somewhat as David was anointed years before he ascended his throne, so our Lord Jesus was anointed King at His Baptism, but only ascended His Throne at the right hand of the Father by His Resurrection and Ascension. At Pentecost He poured forth the Holy Spirit and ever since has been reigning and ruling over the hearts of His people and in His Church. The history of missions is the history of the spread of His reign.

Christ subdues us unto Himself. By the fall we rebelled against God. By nature we are at enmity toward God. The natural man is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can he be. But Christ came to this earth to restore the rule of God. By His Word and His Spirit He subdues our rebellious wills and brings us into the obedience of the Christian faith. He does this, not by external force, but by internal love. The Holy Spirit sheds abroad His

love in our hearts. Christ restores God's reign over us by the way of His communion with us, by living for us, by dying in our stead, by loving us and opening our hearts to accept His love and to love Him in return. His yoke is easy and His burden is light, because His is the yoke of love and the burden of kindness.

He rules over us. We love the Saviour who died to save us. Loving Him means loving God, because He is God. And loving Him means loving man, for He is also man. Now the first four commandments tell us how to love God and the last six tell us how to love man. When we accept Christ as our Saviour, at the same time we begin to love the law which is His loving will for us. And so Christ writes His laws upon our hearts and puts them into our minds. The Christian wants to obey the law in order to show his gratitude to God for saving him. For the Christian, the law is not a fearful burden from a hard taskmaster, but it is the loving will of his gracious heavenly Father. In Christ we live in the kingdom of **grace**, we are not condemned criminals but beloved children. We want to do what our heavenly Father wants us to do, for we trust Him and realize that He knows what is best for us. All obedience is the work of grace, and grace always works obedience.

He defends us. A soldier left to take command of an infantry platoon. They were to face the redoubtable panzer divisions and the air power that had leveled Rotterdam and Warsaw. The words that God spoke to Joshua when he was called to lead the host of the Lord came with special force to his mind: "He hath said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee!' So that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man may do unto me.'" When the forces of battle crashed over them, many of our men found their comfort in the promises of God, such as the soldiers' psalms, the twenty-seventh and the ninety-first. God defends us by restraining and conquering all His and our enemies. Not only the forces of the Nazis, but more particularly the power of Satan. The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. Go to Christ. He can keep Satan from making a catspaw out of you. He has overcome the world and He can keep the love of the world from wrecking your life. Finally Christ shall destroy the power of death itself. Now He is governing all things in heaven and earth in the interest of His people, His Church. He is guiding history to the end that God has in store for Him and for His people. Then He shall present His Church to Himself without spot or blemish.

Q. 27. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross, in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

After considering the three offices of Christ we come to His two estates or conditions. His **humiliation** is His **coming down to earth** and all that He underwent for us here. The past tense is used,

consisted. His estate of exaltation began with His Resurrection but continues today. It is described in the present tense "consisteth."

In the beginning Christ was in the form of God and lived in glory with the Father before the world was. Though He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. The joy of heaven became the man of sorrow. The Lord of angels offered up strong cryings and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death. God the maker of all things was born an infant. He who made the stars was cradled in a manger. He is the Lord of heaven and of earth, yet for His birth they borrowed a stable, for His burial another man's tomb. "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has not where to lay his head." Though He was the King of kings, there was no place for Him in the inn. Born in a stable He was reared in a carpenter's home and learned the trade of Joseph.

In His Person Christ is the Lawgiver. But in His human nature He undertook to pay all our debts. So He volunteered to be made under the law, and obeyed its every command. He endured all the sufferings and miseries life has for men. Though He was Son yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.

Volunteering to answer for our sin He endured the wrath of God which we deserved. As the shadows of Calvary fell over His soul, Jesus prayed: "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will but Thine be done." When the punishment we deserved broke upon Him, our Lord cried: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He drank the cup of our curse that at His Table we might drink the cup of His blessing. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us. Following the death on the cross where He became this curse for us, He was buried and continued under the power of death for a time.

We can never thank our Saviour enough for all He became, for all He did, and for all He endured for us. But we can let our perpetual wonder be:

"That the Great Angel-blinding light should shrink
His blaze, to shine in a poor shepherd's eye;
That the unmeasur'd God low should sink,
As Pris'ner in a few poor rags to ly;
That from his Mother's Breast he milke should drink,
Who feeds with Nectar Heav'n's faire family,
That a vile Manger his low Bed should prove,
Who in a Throne of stars Thunders above;
That he whom the Sun serves, should faintly peepe
Through the clouds of infant flesh! that he, the old
Eternal Word should be a Child, and weepe;
That he who made the fire, should feare the cold,
That Heav'n's high Majesty his Court should keepe
In a clay cottage, by each blast control'd;
That Glories self should serve our Griefs and feares
And frae Eternity submit to years."

Q. 28. Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in His rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

A few years ago a minister was preaching at the Berry School. The high school students said that they thought about Jesus as they did about other characters in history—Caesar, Washington, Napoleom. What was it that they lacked? The living Christ Jesus is not only one who lived and died nineteen centuries ago. He rose from the dead. He lives for us at God's right hand today. He is more alive than any of us are. He is doing more for us today than we are for Him. He did humble Himself to come in His historical life and do and suffer enough to save us. Now God has raised Him to glory and there He is praying for us, speaking to us, reigning over us. He, who died to save us, now lives to give us His salvation.

Christ died for our sins on Good Friday. He was buried and continued in the grave Saturday and rose on the morning of the third day—the first Lord's Day. The risen Christ appeared to Peter, to James, To Thomas, to the eleven to above 500 brethren at once, finally to Paul. He convinced these sober-minded men that He did rise from the dead. And this is the ground of our forgiveness. Our sins were laid on Jesus and carried Him to death. When God raised Him from the dead, God declared that the whole debt of our sins was paid and we could be sure of forgiveness. Then His Resurrection opened the gate for our resurrection so that all who trust in Him will in the end be raised up as He was. The risen Christ now makes alive those who were dead in trespasses and sins and raises them to a life of fellowship with Himself. We call this regeneration or being born again. We shall study more about it in the next few answers.

Here our catechism follows closely the parallel phrases in the Apostles' Creed which many of us say in our Church. Forty days after His Resurrection, Jesus ascended to the Father. He came from God and returned to Him. But He returned as the God-man, as our elder brother with a human as well as a Divine heart of love, as the Head of the Church and the Lord of His saved people. Now He is "sitting at the right hand of God the Father." That means He now shares the Father's glory and His unlimited power. All power in heaven and earth has been given to Him and all things are at His disposal. William Carey, the great missionary to India, said: "All my friends are but one. I rejoice, however, that He is all-sufficient, and can supply all my wants, temporal and spiritual." John G. Paton went to the New Hebrides to face the taunts, the spears, the stones and the guns of cannibals without a fear. For he trusted the living Presence of the Christ who promised: "Lo, I am with you always."

One day the Christ who was rejected by men will come on the clouds of heaven and sit upon the Throne of God to judge the living and the dead. In His mercy to the human race God the Father has appointed His Son to be our judge. The human race

will be judged by one who is also man. All the unerring wisdom of God and all the understanding sympathy of man unite in our Judge. The Christian knows and trusts the Judge for the Judge is His Saviour. Here in life let us be sure that we entrust ourselves to Him and show our faith by our love and deeds of kindness to His brethren. Then we shall have confidence before Him when He comes in His glory.

"When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment Throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

Q. 29. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ by the effectual application of it to us by His Holy Spirit.

Christ died for us over nineteen hundred years ago and over five thousand miles away. How do we receive the blessing He won for us by His death? Christ is a matter of past history and an object of cold thought, until the Holy Spirit brings the living Christ and His redemption to us. The Holy Spirit as the hand of God unites us to Christ, the heart of God. By the inward work of the Spirit we become members of Christ's Body and share in the blessings that belong to the Head of the Body. The Holy Spirit is the key who unlocks the treasures of Christ's merit to us. The preacher and the teacher are the outward teachers, the Holy Spirit is the Inward Teacher showing the things of Christ to us. Thinking of the work of the Holy Spirit, Spurgeon used to close his sermons with these lines:

"We have heard the preacher,
Truth by him has been made known;
But we need a greater Teacher
From the everlasting Throne.
Application is the work of God alone."

Partakers are sharers, those who are given a part in Christ and His redemption. **Redemption** is a purchasing, a buying back, a deliverance. "The Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many. Now a ransom is a price paid to release those who are held in bondage or captivity . . . The fallen state of man is a state of guilt and bondage, from which Christ redeemed His people by laying down His life as a ransom for them. We are bought with a price. We are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." (A. Whyte). He bought us back from the dominion of Satan for the Kingdom of God. He delivered us from the penalty of sin and brought us into the privilege of forgiven children.

If you have a bad infection you apply a poultice to the sore spot. The Holy Spirit **applies** Christ and His benefits to the soul. The work of Christ for us is redemption. The work of the Holy Spirit in us is **application.** We sinners need all that Christ did for us and all the Holy Spirit does for us—that we may be saved.

Q. 30. How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

Apply means to **join,** or **fold together,** or **lay on** as a salve is put on an injured part. The Holy Spirit lays upon the soul the fruits of Christ's redemption by uniting us to Him. And the Holy Spirit does this by shedding abroad the love of God in our heart. He shows God's own love in that Christ died for us. Thus we come to trust and confide in the loving heavenly Father, to believe in Him. Believing means receiving Jesus Christ as our Saviour. (John 1:12). Believing means coming to God in Christ. (John 6:35). Believing means looking to Christ for our salvation. (John 3:14-15). When the Holy Spirit comes into a sinful heart it turns in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ as certainly as the sunflower turns to the sun and as freely as the hurt child runs to his mother. Faith is running to Christ with the feet of the heart, embracing Him with the arms of the spirit, feeding upon Him with the mouth of the soul, resting upon Him alone for salvation. Faith is the empty hand of the beggar that receives Christ for forgiveness.

"Christ has merited (earned) righteousness for as many as are found in Him. In Him God finds us, if we are believers; for by faith we are incorporated (included) in Him. Then, although in ourselves we be altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man which in himself is impure, full of iniquity, full of sin; him being found in Christ through faith, and having his sin in hatred through repentance, him God beholdeth with a gracious eye, puts away his sin by not imputing it (to him), takes quite away the punishment due by pardoning it; and accepts him in Jesus Christ as perfectly righteous as if he had fulfilled all that is commanded him in the law . . . God made HIM to be sin for us WHO knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in HIM." (Hooker).

Faith unites us to Christ or makes us one with Him. He is the head and we are His members so that we are one body with Him. As the Holy Spirit makes us one with Christ in this living union with Him, so God gives us all the blessings Christ purchased for us by dying in our stead. What He gained by acting for us He makes over to us. He gave Himself for us that He might forgive us. He gives Himself to us by His Spirit that His forgiveness may be ours here and now. To Him all the prophets bear witness that whosoever believeth on Him has the forgiveness of sins. The next question will explain our effectual calling.

Q. 31. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the Gospel.

This is a very personal way of describing our conversion. God is a person, I am a person. He calls me and I come to Him. "He saved us and called us with a holy calling." An effectual call is one that gets results. When Mr. Curtis Green was a boy and played with our boys, his mother would call

"Curtis." And often there was no response. When the call "Curtis Green" became more insistent he would lift an eye. But whenever it became "Curtis Vance Green," he would say: "Now she means business, I must go." The last was an effectual call.

Effectual calling is a **work**, not merely an act. Indeed several steps or stages may be distinguished in it. In one step the Holy Spirit convicts or convinces us of our sin. It is all too easy to think about somebody else's sins and to excuse ourselves. When the Holy Spirit works upon our hearts we see our own sin in its wickedness and baseness and misery. We stop excusing ourselves and hate our disobedience to and rebellion against God. We see our sin as that wicked thing God hates. Misery and shame take the place of self-satisfaction and conceit.

More important still, the Holy Spirit shows us Christ. We must all be taught of God. The Inward Teacher enlightens the eyes of our understanding so that we see the Lord Jesus as our loving Saviour. The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him. The Spirit removes the ignorance and the prejudice from our minds so that we see Christ as the One who loved us and gave Himself up to save us.

Yet another thing the gracious Spirit does. Jesus said: "No man **can** come unto me, except the Father which sent me draw him." "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Our fallen nature is dead in trespasses and sins. Our wills are held in bondage to our evil desires, pleasures, lusts, and sins. Here is a steel needle on a pivot. It turns this way and that as the various currents of air strike it. But magnetize that needle and it will settle down in a steady point to the magnetic North. It has now become a useful compass. What magnetizing does to the needle, the Holy Spirit does to the will. He gives it a new purpose and a new direction. Instead of letting it wander hither and yonder over the things of this world, He directs it to Christ and the things of God.

Thus the Spirit persuades and enables me to embrace Jesus Christ. The Patriarchs embraced the promises and the promises are all yea and amen in Christ. As faith is elsewhere described as coming to Christ, so here it is embracing Christ, clasping, taking, receiving Him. "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on His Name."

The Gospel is the Good News of salvation. It is God's own story of Christ, His beloved Son. And God freely offers Christ to everyone. Christ is the bread of life. The banquet is spread. Come and eat! You are guilty of no presumption in coming or in eating. The Spirit and bride say, Come. And he that heareth let him say, Come. And he that is athirst let him come. And he that will, let him take of the water of life freely.

Q. 32. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

Out of God's great heart of love came His onl begotten Son to be our Saviour. The living Chris at the right hand of the Father sends the Hol Spirit to unite us to Himself. From this union wit Christ the Holy Spirit brings us exceeding grea and precious blessings. Some of these benefits c good things come in this life, some at death, an some at the resurrection. This question is the be ginning of a group or section of seven question 32-38. This question and those through 36 dea with the blessings for this life, 37 with the blessing at death, and 38 with those at the resurrectio Each item in this answer is to be expounded in th following questions: justification or forgiveness i 33, adoption or being accepted as children of Go in 34, sanctification or holy living in 35. Accordin to the thirty-sixth answer, the benefits which g with or come from these three blessings are: bein made sure of the Father's love, peace in our con sciences, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase or growt in grace, and being continued or kept by the powe of God unto final salvation.

Q. 33. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace wherein He pardoneth all our sins, and acceptet us as righteous in His sight, only for the right eousness of Christ imputed to us and received b faith alone.

In the fifth century, Paulinus, Bishop of Nola expended all his large estates in redeeming fron captivity his brethren enslaved by the Goths. Whe his resources were exhausted, a poor widow cam pleading her destitute condition due to the fac that the barbarians had carried her only son awa to Africa as a slave. Paulinus immediately wen over to Africa. There he found the young man an entered into an agreement with his master to tak the young man's place as a slave. Accordingly, th youth returned to care for his mother and Paulinu continued for months under the yoke. Later whe the master heard of his high standing Paulinus wa released.

Finding us in bondage to sin and the law, Chris volunteered to take our place that we might b freed. He was made under the law, and God laid o Him the iniquity of us all. He was made sin for u that we might be made the righteousness of God i Him. Because of all Christ did and suffered for u God forgives us, pronounces us just, accepts us a righteous in Christ.

Justification is an act, not a slow process, not long work. It is the act of a judge. When a ma stands accused before a court, the judge either d clares him condemned or pronounces him acquitte freed from condemnation, forgiven. It is an imm diate, a full act. A man is completely justifie "There is therefore now no condemnation to the that are in Christ Jesus." This is God's act. Whe God justifieth who is he that condemneth? An God's act to us is of His free grace. We do not d serve this great mercy. We are undeserving sinner rebels who deserve punishment. But God has bee pleased to bind us up in the covenant of grace an the bundle of life with His only begotten Son, Jesu Christ. God looks upon Christ and His righteousne and accepts all those who trust in Christ

righteous for His sake. He was punished that we might be forgiven. He obeyed the law 100 percent perfect. And God counts His perfect obedience to us. God reckons Christ's righteousness to us, He puts it to our account. He **imputes** it to us. In this way we are regarded as righteous and treated as just by God. Since Christ did give perfect obedience and did endure the full penalty for His people, since He paid our full debt, therefore, God is just even when He justifies the sinner who trusts in Christ. But to us it is an act of overflowing love and mercy.

In this act of grace God pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in His sight. Our sins were laid on Jesus and He satisfied all our obligations. Now His righteousness is laid on us and for His sake God forgives our sins and accepts us as righteous in His sight. The Publican in the Temple bowed his head and cried: "God, be merciful to me a sinner." And that man went home **justified.** The dying thief said: "We two thieves are receiving the just reward of our deeds. We are so bad we deserve to be crucified." Then he entrusted himself to Jesus, saying: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." And the Lord Jesus said to him: "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." So bad he deserved to be crucified and yet so fully justified that he was immediately received into Paradise!

Now this great change comes to us, not from any work we have done or can do to earn it. It comes to us when we admit we cannot earn righteousness, and trust Christ to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves and what we cannot do without. We entrust ourselves to our Saviour, we confess Him as our Lord.

Q. 34. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

Justification is a deed of God acting as a judge and pronouncing me, a sinner, righteous for the sake of the righteousness of Christ imputed to me. Adoption is an act in which God as a Father receives me, the sinner, as His child and gives me the liberties and privileges which Christ, the elder brother, has won for me. No human story can fully illustrate the Gospel. This one goes part of the way:

> King Zaleucis of the Locrians made a law that if anyone was convicted of a certain crime he should have both his eyes put out. One of the first persons convicted was his own son. What was Zaleucis to do? If he were only a King he could execute the penalty and forget the matter. If he were only a father he could forgive the offense and receive his son into his arms. But he was both a king whose honor was pledged to the fair enforcement of his laws and a father whose heart yearned for his son. King Zaleucis solved the problem by having one of his own eyes put out and one of the eyes of his son. Thereafter when men looked into the empty socket in the king's face they remembered the sanctity of the King's law and the love of the Father's heart.

God our heavenly Father, the Lord of heaven and of earth, did more than take the half of our punishment. In the person of His own Son He took our place and bore all our punishment in His own body on the Tree. He did this that we might be forgiven children rather than guilty subjects.

In adoption a man takes into his family one who was not originally a part of it and gives him his name, the enjoyment of his home, the right of inheriting his property. The adopted child has the full standing of a son or a daughter in the home.

God made Adam in His own image and put him on probation in order that if he stood he might have an established place in the family of God. But Adam fell and was driven from the presence of God. What Adam lost, Christ won for us. The eternal Son of God became also the Son of Man that in our human nature He might live the life of a loving, obedient Child of God. He kept His state of loving sonship unbroken through the difficulties of our life. Now He gives us this high and blessed standing He maintained for us. And He regenerates us, or gives us a new heart—a heart that loves and serves God. "As many as received Him to them gave He the power, the right, the authority, to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name. Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man—but of God." "We are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." God for Christ's sake receives us into His family and assures us of a share not only in His bounty but in His heart. God our Father loves us more than our earthly father does. He knows better what is good for us and He is more able to care for and protect us than are the parents in our homes.

When the papers carried the story of an American Advance led by a division in which a son served, the earthly father definitely committed the lad to His heavenly Father. For the heavenly Father knows better, loves more and can do more than the earthly parent. Moreover, the heavenly Father was present and did save the son from anything worse than a minor wound—while the earthly father was thousands of miles away and would have been powerless to save even had he been present.

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness.

Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, are all of God's free grace—of His undeserved love to sinners. "If it is of (God's) grace it is no more of our works: otherwise grace is no more grace." "To make a man a saint, grace is absolutely necessary; and whoever doubts this does not know what a saint is, nor what a man is." (Pascal).

But while justification and adoption are acts, sanctification is a work that continues throughout life. Justification and adoption are complete at once, sanctification is a gradual process. They change our relation to God, sanctification changes our lives to accord with the new relation. "In adoption we are taken into the family of God, and in

sanctification we take on the family features." (Whyte). God took Israel out of Egypt rather quickly, but it took forty years to get Egypt out of Israel.

The ground of justification and of adoption is the work of Christ for us. The life of sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. The power of the Spirit in the life of a Christian may be compared with the wind that moves a sail boat. Let the wind stop. The boat will stagger on a few lengths but very soon it ceases to move forward and then drifts backward with the current.

As the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts He brings a new life. By His power the soul that was dead in sin is born again, regenerated. Thereafter He nourishes the new life and so renews the whole man after the image of God. He makes the tree good and then causes good fruit to grow on the good tree. His gifts are faith, hope and love. The fruits He brings into our lives are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faithfulness, temperance.

Even when we fall into sin and grieve Him He does not wholly forsake us. Wherever there is a penitent heart to be comforted and restored there is the blessed Comforter. And all holiness or separation from sin is His work. In most cases sanctification is not a steady progress upward, but in spite of our many falls He patiently leads us onward towards God's idea of a man. And Christ is God's idea of a man.

Justification and sanctification have been compared thus: "Christ never comes into the soul unattended, He brings the Holy Spirit with Him, and the Spirit His train of Gifts and graces." "Christ comes with a blessing in each hand, forgiveness in one and holiness in the other, and never gives either to any who will not take both. But Christ's forgiveness of all sins is complete at once, because less would do us no good; His holiness is dispensed by degrees, and to none wholly in this life, lest we should slight His forgiveness." "It is the joy of my heart that I am free from guilt, and the desire of my heart to be freed from sin." "Whenever I die, I die a sinner; but by the grace of God, penitent, and I trust, accepted in the Beloved."

—Thomas Adam.

Q. 36. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are: Assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase in grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

A good Bible commentary on this answer is found in Romans 5:1-11; and 8:26-39. When we come to God in Christ we find Him the gracious Father whose hands are always overflowing with kindnesses to us.

The Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts when He fixes our eyes on Christ, the gift of God's love. All about us there are the sick,

the needy, the hurt. Pain, sorrow, accidents, are everywhere. In the changing experiences of life we need to keep ourselves in the love of God. Luther asked but one thing to live by: the certainty that God was gracious and merciful toward him. This assurance may not come to everyone at once. One can be a Christian believer without being entirely sure that he is. But as we keep looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith God gives us a sure faith in Him.

"Then I began to give place to the Word, which, with power, did over and over make this joyful sound within my soul, **Thou art my love,** thou art my **Love;** and nothing shall separate thee from my love: and with that Romans 8:39 came into my mind. Now was my heart filled with comfort and hope, now I could believe that my sins would be forgiven me. Yea I was so taken up with the love and mercy of God, I could not tell how to contain till I got home. I think I could have spoken of His love and of His mercy to me, even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed land before me, had they been capable to have understood me." (Bunyan).

And from the same look comes peace of conscience. Every one of us knows that he is responsible for his sins. And the only way to gain a sense of forgiveness is to trust in the Lamb of God who took our responsibilities and answered for our sins on Calvary. For His sake the Father forgives us and gives us peace in our consciences.

"Look, Father, look on His anointed face,
And only look on us as found in Him;
Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,
Our prayers so languid, and our faith so dim;
For lo! between our sins and their reward
We set the Passion of Thy Son our Lord."

The Christian loses his love for the pleasures of this world, but he is the man who has true joy. God has made us for Himself and our hearts are restless until they rest in Him. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but love and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. When we sin we grieve the Holy Spirit, but our prayer of confession is: "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the **joy** of thy salvation." As He stood in the shadow of the Cross, Christ prayed that His **joy** might be in His disciples and that their **joy** might be full. Paul wrote from a Roman prison: **Rejoice** in the Lord always and again I say **rejoice.**

The story is told of an aged minister who received a letter containing a check for $50.00 and a statement, "more to follow." Some days later another letter, exactly similar and others of the same nature. When God gives us one gift of His grace He always adds this note, "more to follow." We have so far received only the down payment, the earnest of the Holy Spirit. When people buy an expensive property they generally pay only a part, a small first part, and then gradually the balance. God has given us only a portion of the grace and blessing of the Holy Spirit. He will continue to give us more and more of His blessings. In Pilgrim's

Progress there is a picture of a fire on which Satan is continually pouring water and yet ever and again the fire leaps up more brightly. On the other side of the wall Pilgrim sees the Holy Spirit ever and again pouring oil on the fire. By grace of the Spirit, by the keeping power of God we are preserved in the Christian faith. Our Lord says that He knows His sheep and gives them eternal life and that no one is able to take them out of His hand. We are kept through faith unto salvation.

Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies being still united to Christ do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

Death does come into our homes and into our classes sometimes from age, sometimes from accidents, sometimes from sickness, sometimes from war. What happens to a Christian believer at death? Our catechism is so clear here that some ministers use the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth answers in their burial services. We want a definite word and these words have comforted many hearts. Briefly, they mean that Christ has changed the face of death.

Perhaps you boys and girls would like an illustration drawn from the days of knighthood and chivalry. Each knight carried a shining sword. Sometimes he wore it in the scabbard hanging at his side, sometimes he grasped its flashing blade in his hand. When the sword was in the knight's hand it was separated from its scabbard, but in either case both sword and scabbard were united to the person of the knight. Let us compare the soul of a Christian to the sword and his body to the scabbard, and let us think of the Person of Christ as like the person of the knight. When the Christian lives he is like the sword in the scabbard, body and soul joined together and attached to the Person of Christ. When the Christian dies it is like the knight taking the sword out of the scabbard and holding it up in his hand, for, then soul and body are separate one from the other. But here is the glorious thing: both soul and body are still united to the Person of Christ as both the sword and the scabbard are still united to the person of the knight.

As God changed Paul on the Road to Damascus from an enemy of Christ to a devoted Apostle, as the Holy Spirit changed Peter at Pentecost from a coward to a hero, so at death God breaks this evil self-will of ours and frees us from the sinful desires of the flesh. As Jesus assured the thief on the cross that he would be with HIM in paradise that day, and as Paul departed to be with Christ, so those who die trusting in Jesus go to be with HIM in glory. We do not know too much about their place or condition. We know that heaven is one of the mansions of the Father's House and that it is with Christ.

"My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim,
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him."

When one of our loved ones dies we carefully lay his body in a coffin as if we were tucking a child in to sleep. We are not saying goodbye forever. Because Jesus died and rose again those who sleep in HIM, He will bring with Him when He returns in glory. Until then we trust them body as well as soul to their loving Saviour's keeping. He watches over them whether their bodies sleep in the graveyard at home or in beautiful cemeteries the Government has made for the soldiers in Holland or in Australia. Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

"And, friends, dear friends, when it shall be
That this low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep,
Let one, most loving of you all,
Say, 'Not a tear must o'er her fall—
He giveth His beloved sleep.' "

Q. 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A. At the resurrection believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.

Railroad men call the end of the line the terminal. In railroad terms, death for a believer is not a terminal but only a tunnel with the throne of God and of the Lamb at the other end. Or to return to the illustration we used in our last study: as the knight returns the sword to its scabbard; so when He comes again, Christ will raise up our bodies and return our souls to them. God made the whole man, body and soul, and in Christ God saves the whole man body as well as soul. Of course, it is only God who can raise the dead. So when we believe in the Resurrection we are necessarily believing in God, in His Almighty Power that did raise Christ up from the dead.

When we entrust ourselves to Christ, our Saviour, He says to us as He did to the paralytic: "Son (Daughter), be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." Now this occurs in the hidden places of the heart. When Christ comes in His glory He is to sit upon the throne of His glory and before Him are to be gathered all nations. "We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to render account of the deeds done in the flesh." The word of forgiveness spoken in the secret of our hearts is now to be publicly declared.

Jesus says that those who confess Him before men, He will confess before His Father in heaven. As a name is read out, the recording angel reads from the books that he believed in Christ, that he confessed the Saviour with His lips and with His life. And then the Saviour Himself reads out that name as one of His own written in the Lamb's book of life.

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress:
'Midst flaming words in these arrayed
With joy shall I lift up my head.

The Library, Union Theological Seminary

"Behold shall I stand in that great day:
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully, through these absolved (freed) I am
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame."

The enthroned Christ will say: "Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "And these shall go into everlasting life."

Everlasting life is a perfect blessedness in God and with God. It is not only that we are to find God in heaven, but that in God we are to find heaven. "To sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was the phraseology of the Old Testament, but to sit with US—with Father, Son and Holy Ghost—this is Christ's language, this is New Testament language." (Goodwin). God is the portion of His people. He has made us for Himself and we are restless until we rest in Him. The psalmist speaks of God as "my exceeding joy." In Thy presence there are joys forever more.

The return of Christ and the Resurrection of His people is the great event of the future. All the eyes of prophecy are fixed upon it. The Christian life is like a bird supported by two wings. One of these is the precious faith resting on what Christ has done for us, the other is the blessed hope directed to His return in glory and all He will do then. This answer gives four specific things which He will do then: raise us up, acknowledge us, acquit us in the judgment, and make us perfectly blessed in enjoying God forever.

Q. 84. What doth every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

Between the last question we discussed and this question our Shorter Catechism gives a full treatment of the Ten Commandments. By studying the Commandments and applying them to our thoughts, words and deeds, we see how many sins we have. This question brings before us the seriousness of every sin. Some sins are worse than others, but there are no little sins for there is no little God to sin against. Every sin is against the great God of heaven and earth, and so every sin is a great sin. If you steal from the corner grocer you have robbed him, but you have broken God's law and you have sinned against God.

God's wrath is different from our getting mad. His wrath is free from those imperfections of passion, resentment, fury, unreasonableness and inconstancy which make anger so evil in us. Indeed, the wrath of God denotes **the effects of righteous indignation** rather than the feeling of anger. Our wicked opposition to God calls forth His holy opposition to us, that is, to our wickedness. "In God, who is the living **good**, wrath appears as the holy disapprobation (disapproval) of evil, and the firm resolve to destroy it."

As His wrath is not rage, so God's curse is not violent language or cruel treatment. It is the punishment due to sin. "The wages of sin is death." "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men." Notice

that the Books of Isaiah, Ecclesiastes and Malachi close on the solemn warning of God's judgment. The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the end of the world close the same way. (Math. 7:27; 25:46). There are solemn words in the last chapter in the Bible.

Owen says that the curse of God consists, first, in the sentence of death, temporal and eternal; second, in the loss of the grace and the favor of God; third, in guilt and horror of conscience, despair and anguish here; with, fourth, eternal damnation hereafter.

The Bible uses such solemn terms as "everlasting fire," "everlasting punishment," "everlasting destruction," "shame and everlasting contempt," "the outer darkness," "the blackness of darkness," "the lakes of fire and brimstone" to warn us of the wrath to come. It does this to deter us, to turn us away from Hell and turn us to the arms of the Saviour. God tells us to meet our sins and find forgiveness here and not to have them meet us in the world to come. Now is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation. Christ can save the last, the least and the lowest who will come to God by Him. "Justice reigns in hell, and grace in heaven. Men's merit makes hell, and Christ's merit makes heaven." (Rom. 6:23). (Traill).

Q. 85. What doth God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

If you have followed our study so far you know that we are all guilty before God, that none of us can free himself of his guilt, and that God has set before us a Saviour who can put us right with God. Now we are considering how we can lay hold on the Redemption Christ secured for sinners. The Wages of Sin—the thing that sin deserves—is death. The wrath and curse of God is due to us for every sin. And each of us has many sins. But there is a Saviour who has met and satisfied all the conditions of the covenant of Grace. Christ Jesus has done enough to save everyone who trusts in Him. We have also seen that the Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and brings them to us. How do we on our part lay hold of Christ and His salvation?

Even when the gift is freely offered the giver requires that the gift be accepted. God offers us salvation in Christ, He asks that we accept Christ and His salvation. The inward means by which we accept are **faith in Jesus Christ** and **repentance unto life.** The outward means which our wise and loving heavenly Father has given to keep us in touch with Christ are: the Word (the Bible), the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and prayer. As we use these inward and outward means God gives or imparts to us the blessings of salvation or the benefits of redemption. In the next two questions we will learn the meaning of faith and of repentance.

Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel.

Let us put this answer together with those to the thirtieth and thirty-first questions. Then we will see that faith is the work of **the Holy Spirit** Who persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ, and also that in it **we** receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation. The Gospel is God's offer of Christ. The Holy Spirit effectually calls us to accept Him. By the grace He gives we do accept Christ and this acceptance is our faith.

The Bible sometimes calls faith a **looking** to the Divine Redeemer. "Look unto Me and be ye saved." "Behold the Lamb of God." Sometimes it is described as a **coming** to Christ. "Come unto Me all ye that labor." "He that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." Again it is a **receiving** of Him. "As many as **received** Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Finally it is a **fleeing for refuge** and a resting or relying upon God our Saviour. Faith is assenting to and approving of God's way of saving us sinners. But this assent passes into personal trust. Faith is trust in a person. We accept the word of a man, we trust our friend to help us when we are in need. We bring our sick brother or sister and entrust him to our doctor. If we trust a friend, how much more ought we to trust the best friend a sinner ever had—the Saviour who died for sinners. We receive Christ and live in reliance upon Him alone for salvation. That is, we trust ourselves to Him believing that He and He alone can and will save us.

It is not Christ and our efforts that saves. It is Christ alone. It is not Christ and the prayers of the Virgin Mary or of the saints. It is Christ alone. It is not Christ and the worship of the Church. It is Christ alone. It is not even Christ and faith, it is Christ alone who saves and faith is only trusting in Him alone to save us. "It is not thy joy in Christ that saves thee—it is Christ. It is not thy hold on Christ that saves thee—it is Christ. It is not thy assurance of salvation that saves thee—it is Christ. It is not even thy faith in Christ, though faith is the means—it is Christ." Faith is the empty hand of the beggar that putteth on Christ for justification. "The principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace."

Q. 87. What is repentance unto life?

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

Repentance is a change from the mind of self to the mind of Christ. As one turns to God in Christ he turns from sin. Faith and repentance are thus

two sides of one act. "Repentance is the act of a believer; and faith is the act of a penitent. So that whoever believes repents, and whoever repents believes." (C. Hodge).

Jesus came preaching: "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He told the disciples that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." Peter declared that God had exalted Christ a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and the remission of sins. Paul testified "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Repentance unto life is distinguished from a mere outward change or a momentary regret or remorse. True repentance is a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit. He renews our wills so that we freely come to God asking His forgiveness. When the Holy Spirit brings a sinner face to face with the Holy God, he cries with Job: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

The Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. He shows us God's own love in that Christ died for the ungodly. In this way He enables us to apprehend, or to lay hold on, or to understand the mercy of God in Christ. In the light of the loving-kindness of God sin looks worse than anywhere else. I have sinned against God who so loved me as to die for me in Christ. "When this amazing love is fully comprehended and distinctly realized, the stoutest heart of the proudest sinner will yield to its mighty influence. Love is the talisman by which God subdues the sinner's heart and gains his supreme affection. Let him firmly believe and strongly realize that Jesus was indeed the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world, and that it was Love, almighty Love, which occasioned the awful sacrifice, and he will bow his soul in the depths of humility and give his heart to God." (Thornwell).

Additional copies of this booklet are available at 25c per copy, $2.50 per dozen, or $20.00 per one hundred copies, postpaid.

ORDER FROM

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

WEAVERVILLE ... NORTH CAROLINA

A Presbyterian weekly magazine devoted to the statement, defense and propagation of the Gospel, the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

Books By Dr. Robinson

CHRIST THE HOPE OF GLORY.....$3.00
Christological Eschatology

OUR LORD—AN AFFIRMATION
OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST.....$3.00

WHO SAY YE THAT I AM?.....$2.50
Six Dunn Award Theses
On The Deity Of Christ

~~WHAT IS CHRISTIAN FAITH?.....$1.00~~

CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.....$2.50
Fuller Seminary
Payton Lectures

ORDER FROM

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

WEAVERVILLE ... NORTH CAROLINA